

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

PATRICK MICHAEL BULAS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS


IN

PRINTMAKING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 2001



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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Final Visual Presentation

submitted by PARTICK MICHAEL BULAS partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

The University of Alberta

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
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TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
liquid radiance Insurance Value: \$200.00	2001	Mezzotint	8' x 8"
kinematic movements Insurance Value: \$300.00	2000	Etching	19 ³ / ₄ " x 23 ³ / ₄ "
field suspension Insurance Value: 600.00	2001	Etching, Relief	33" x 23 ⁷ / ₈ "
terrella spheres Insurance Value: \$250.00	1999	Etching	11 ³ / ₄ " x 20 ⁷ / ₈ "
logarithm glow two Insurance Value: \$250.00	2001	Woodcut, Etching	10" x 20"

Artist Statement

The phenomena studied within physics and astronomy has been the basis for my work for several years now. What began as an instinctive response to the aesthetic qualities of these phenomena soon became an intellectual concept that continues to direct my work. These fields of light and energy are essentially manifestations of the structure of the universe, the very fabric of reality. It is difficult to comprehend the task of physicists as they attempt to discover how the universe “ticks.”

The term “physics” comes from the Greek word for the essence or true nature of all things, “physis.” Fundamental to all mystical, philosophical, and scientific thought is the search for the essential nature or “physis” of the universe. The ultimate goal of physics is to reach an understanding of the underlying fundamental laws which explains the universe as a whole. For example, the same basic principles of gravity applies to both an apple falling from a tree and the planetary orbit of the Earth around the Sun. These laws are not the product of chance, nor are they imposed on nature by a human need to categorize and rationalize the universe. When one considers what is involved to maintain the constant motion of the universe, it becomes evident that the universe has an order or harmony that can not be ignored.

While rational analysis and observation continue to be crucial to contemporary physics, there is also room for abstraction, instinct, and imagination. The universe does not remain static, but is dynamic and ambiguous. Matter and energy are considered to be one in the same and light is thought to exist as both a wave and a particle. Some describe reality itself as existing as folds in space-time. These concepts blur the lines between physics, mysticism, and philosophy.

I keep in mind the mystery and wonder invoked by the phenomena examined in physics as I develop my work. I often contrast a simple structure or diagram with a complex field of light and atmosphere. I sometimes use sequences and repetition to both emphasize the dynamic nature and the careful “frame by frame” observation of the phenomena. It is my intention to create images that allude to scientific phenomena and observation, but remain ambiguous and allow the viewer to contemplate what he or she is looking at. After all, it is this sense of contemplation and wonder that is the basis of science and art.

Patrick Bulas
2001

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Alberta Foundation for the Arts for their generous support.

Anybody I might have missed.

Last but certainly not least, my mom and my sister. Thank you for your love, support and putting up with me.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of my dad.

Slide List

Title	Medium	Image size (cm)	Year
1 zenith filter one	etching	30.5 x 60.5	2000
2 zenith filter three	etching	30.5 x 60.5	2001
3 terrella spheres	etching	30 x 53	1999
4 magnetospheric currents	etching	40 x 80	2001
5 particle spin	etching, relief	31 x 68	2001
6 chronographic discs	etching, relief	32 x 73.5	2001
7 logarithm glow one	woodcut, relief	25.5 x 50.5	2001
8 logarithm glow two	woodcut, relief	25.5 x 50.5	2001
9 field suspension	etching, relief	83.5 x 60.5	2001
10 terrella echo	etching	29 x 68	2000
11 continuous light flow through a liquid core	mezzotint	20 x 20	2000
12 glow intensity	mezzotint	20 x 20	2001
13 liquid luminescence	mezzotint	20 x 20	2001
14 kinetimatic movements	etching	50.5 x 60.5	2000
15 conduit	etching	22.5 x 28.5	2000
16 terrella magnetization	etching	19.5 x 33	2000
17 field pattern	etching, silkscreen	75 x 60.5	2001
18 Galactic Plane- northern hemisphere	woodcut, etching	38 x 38	2001
19 Galactic Plane- southern hemisphere	woodcut, etching	38 x 38	2001
20 Galactic Plane- rotational velocities	relief	38 x 38	2001

Science meets fine art

Printmaker Bulas
attempts to explain
the universe

SHOW PREVIEW

Fields of Light
and Drawing Cristina

Showing at: Fine Arts Building Gallery,
89th Avenue and 112th Street

When: through Sunday

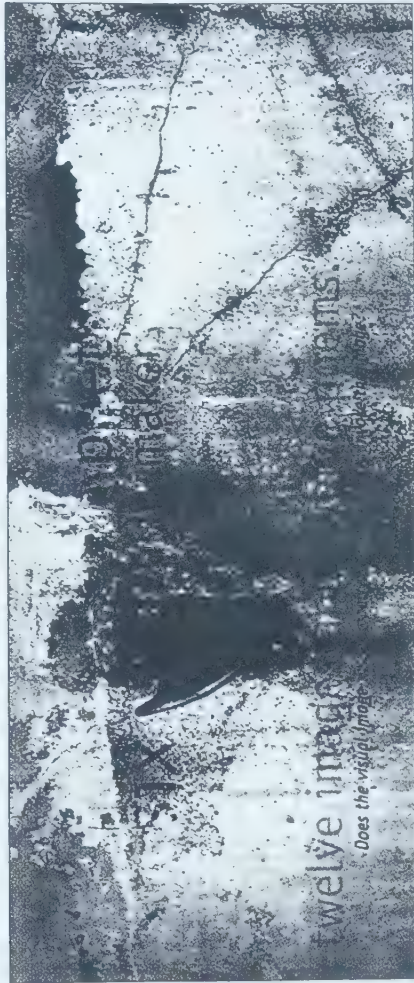
Imaging Time:
Booklaunch, Print Exhibit and
Poetry Reading

Showing at: SNAP Gallery, 10137 104th
St.

When: today 7 p.m. (free admission)

According to printmaker Patrick Bulas, the worlds of science and fine art have more in common than you might think. Both are explorations into the deep underlying rules behind the cosmos and our attempts to "explain the universe," the 25-year-old artist says of his MFA printmaking final presentation in the Fine Arts Building Gallery.

Both call for a delicate balance of instinct and analysis—an equilibrium that Bulas tries to depict visually in his prints.



A photogravure by Steven Dixon, from the book *Imaging Time*

Bulas's deeply layered works exhibit a deep lyrical aestheticism juxtaposed with direct quotations to the emotionally cooler world of scientific illustration and mathematical representation.

For example, many of the multi-panelled works evoke old filmstrips or animation cells. In effect, the well-read artist is trying to underline the common formal process that underlines both practices.

While he works from illustrations and diagrams found in the journals and textbooks he loves to peruse, Bulas doesn't want to ever quote too directly from his initial source. Often he pins the original source image to the wall and does charcoal studies to focus and distance himself before he starts work etching his copper plates.

"There's still so much more exploration I can do with this work."

Drawing Cristina

Also working between disciplines, Margaret Brooks' exhibit *Drawing Cristina* on the gallery's ground floor has much

more to do with the re-contextualization of process and a desire to dig into the foundations of the urge to create visual art.

For starters, Brooks, now completing her elementary education PhD, doesn't want viewers to look at her exhibit as a completed "product."

Rather, she wants people to see the larger charcoal drawings and multimedia works as physical reminders of her larger study in the ways by which art is created and how artwork can function as vehicle for communication.

"There's lots that's communicated with marks on paper, especially by children," says the 50-year-old artist, who's saddened by how quickly we stop "listening" to children's art.

Working on her large-scale drawings of the hands of Cristina, a devoted hobby-



Untitled (paper patterns, message oils and threads) by Margaret Brooks

seamstress, Brooks set out to explode the power relation between model and artist and the methods by which art is framed historically and culturally.

In effect, Brooks tries to create a collaboration between herself and her mod-

el—a collaboration that children exhibit naturally with their art. "Children have no problem making a mark on another child's art—they love to share."

SNAP poetry and prints

Tonight at the downtown headquarters of the Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artists (SNAP), another multidisciplinary project will be launched at a special poetry reading/print exhibit.

It's a collaboration between six artists (and SNAP members) and six poets (belonging to the Stroll of Poets Society) who've been tossed together and asked to produce work that answers to each other's processes.

After tonight's event, a special limited-edition (25 copies) book will be produced that will enshrine this unique artistic experiment.

"This has provided a great opportunity for those involved to reconsider the whole process of making art," says Steven Dixon, a local printmaker and one of the project's co-ordinators. "Working this way another approach was always being considered as you created your work."

The finished art books are also being produced on an archaic Vandercook Proofing Press (a hot lead, hand-fed printing press) which not only helps keep the historical typesetting craft alive, it also allows poets and artists access to the rich "history of printed work," says Dixon.

"It reminds us that words are not just blips on our computer screens."

Artists involved in the project include Greig Rasmussen, Sean Caulfield, Akiko Taniguchi and Tomoyo Iraya.

Gilbert A. Bouchard

FAB shows meld experiences of the mind and the body

ART REVIEW

*Drawing Christina
and Fields of Light*

Margaret Brooks
and Patrick Bulas

FAB Gallery
Until 14 October

Magdalena Koper
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT STAFF

Among the gentle and flowing works of art of Margaret Brooks and the revolutionary prints of Patrick Bulas, there is something lurking that must be experienced first hand.

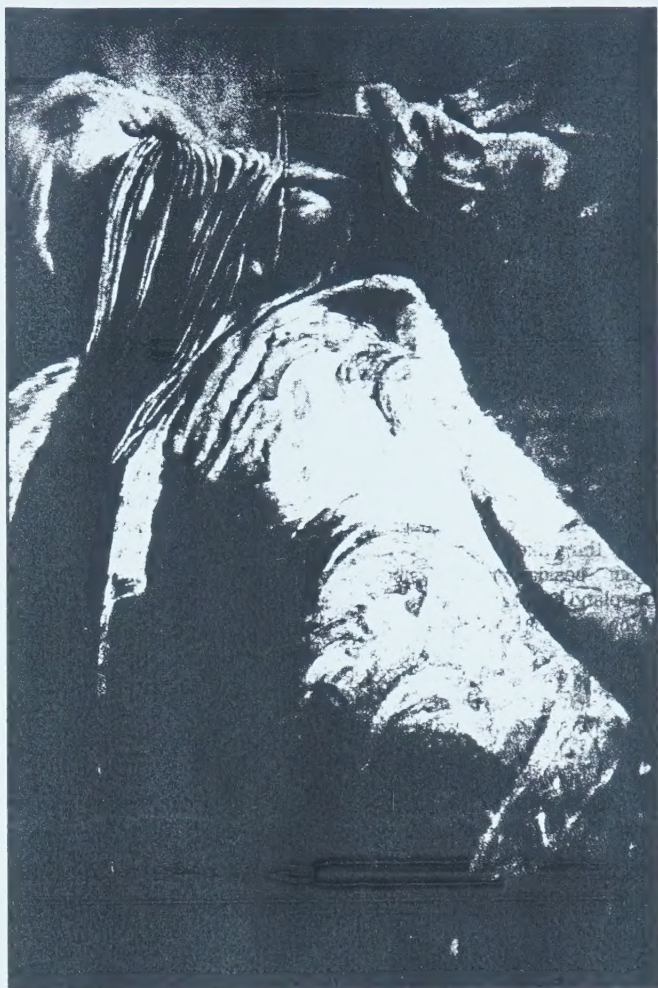
The main floor of the Fab Gallery hosts Brook's *Drawing Christina* exhibit. This display is notable not only for its original medium of hand sewing, but also for the style that Brooks chose to explore.

All the pieces are done with charcoal, and show a dance of hands on a white rugged-edged paper of different sizes. The detailed pieces have simple titles like "Mending #1 and #2" and "Listening." These works accentuate of the simplicity and purity of the art of hand knitting.

Alongside the pictures of patching and mending, Brooks also displays the physical result of her stitching. It is hard to explain these unpleasant-looking things; composed of tissue, thread and massage oil, these hanging "bags" gleam as if they are the fresh organic waste of some giant organism. Their skin-tone color and glossy membrane create the unsettling sensation that you are seeing actual hanging body parts.

In stark contrast to Brooks' celebration of the physical and sensual, Patrick Bulas' exhibit on the second floor, *Fields of Light*, is the result of a melding of art and science.

The fields of physics and astronomy serve as inspiration for such works as "Particle Spin", "Electromagnetic Currents" and



"Threads" by Margaret Brooks in charcoal and tea.

"Field Suspension."

The unusual mix of disciplines gives these works a futuristic, spacey dimension that works because, according to the artist, "it is the sense of contemplation and wonder that is the basis of science and art."

Although light is used as a tool throughout his exhibit, it is the black and white works in mezotint that stand out. In these works, luminescence is used to showcase the most desirable features of glass containers. The artist further explains that these "fields

of light and energy are essentially manifestations of structure of the universe."

The exhibit uses sequence and repetition to portray "frame by frame" observations that show the beauty of phenomena that are difficult to see with the naked eye.

The subject matter of *Drawing Cristina* and *Fields of Light* might be exact opposites, but at the FAB Gallery they come together to showcase the work of the sensual body and the scientific mind. The result is a balanced artistic experience.

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